



Pathway to Prevention

Educating Parents about Prevention of Teen Drug & Alcohol Abuse



September 2015

The alarming impact of legalized marijuana; What's a parent to do?

The [Coalition for Placer Youth](#) recently hosted a compelling presentation by River Coyote, MPH, who highlighted the powerful forces behind the legalization of marijuana. Make no mistake about it: marijuana is big business, and there is a tremendous amount of money funneled into its production, marketing and sales. Those efforts lead kids to believe that marijuana is safe to smoke or otherwise consume. What can we learn from Colorado's experience since pot was legalized in 2014?

- A number of otherwise stable and healthy people killed themselves or others while high on pot.
- Calls to the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center have almost doubled.
- There has been a huge spike in the number of kids aged 12 or less admitted to emergency rooms for accidental marijuana ingestion.
- Reported veterinary cases for accidental ingestion by pets have risen from two a month to 15 a month.
- The number of injuries from butane honey oil lab explosions has increased dramatically.
- There's been a significant increase in the number of kids aged 12-17 expelled from school for drug violations.

It's time to ramp up the conversation with your teens. Talk with them about the inaccurate depiction of pot as

Tools of the Month

Want to understand how drugs, alcohol, stress, mental illness and the digital "invasion" impact the developing teen brain? Read [The Teenage Brain](#) to find out. And check out the other [books we recommend](#).

Want to give your teens a face-saving reason to tell their friends, "I'd like to party, but my parents drug test me." [Buy low-cost drug tests here](#) and give teens a powerful tool to resist peer pressure.

Want to dispose of your prescription drugs in a safe way? [Check with CalRecycle](#) to learn your year-round options, and look for local Take-Back days in the Fall.

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"natural" and "safe." Help them understand what marijuana's neurotoxicity to the developing brain might mean to them:

- One out of nine kids who smokes pot will become addicted. Marijuana, which is at least 500% stronger now than in the 80s, is the number one drug that teens seek treatment for.
- The chances of developing schizophrenia are significantly increased by heavy pot smoking or consumption during the early teen years.
- Their IQ could drop - permanently. A 25-year study that followed 1,037 people (aged 13-38) showed an 8 point drop in IQ among heavy users who started smoking pot in their early teens. The more they used and the younger they started, the more their IQ declined. If someone had an average IQ (100) before they started smoking pot and they lost 8 points, well, now their IQ is in the bottom third of all IQs in the nation.

Use the tips in our [Parent Awareness Report](#) to keep the dialogue open with your teens about the dangers of smoking or consuming marijuana and its impact on their developing brains. Awareness + education = prevention.

Sincerely,

Kim Box

Executive Director, Pathway to Prevention

Pathway to Prevention is working with local high schools to develop and implement Parent Awareness Campaigns to educate parents and give them tools. [Contact us](#) if your high school needs help in this important area.



Need Help??

If you are struggling with the chemical dependency of a child of *any* age, go to [ParentPathway](#) to find resources, experience, strength and hope.

Parting Notes

Evolving social norms create a permissive "everybody's doing it" culture that encourages drug use. Take a look at Colorado to see how mainstream marijuana has become:

- There are more licensed medical marijuana centers in Denver than pharmacies.
- The 2014 "Pot Pavilion" at the State Fair featured a joint rolling contest and a "Biggest Plant" contest. As an unfortunate side note, over 100 fair goers unknowingly ingested chocolate that was laced with pot. Many went to the hospital, fearing that they were having a heart attack or stroke. Over 100 people



Don't be left behind! The [Collision Course - Teen Addiction Epidemic](#) trailer has been viewed over 110,000 times on YouTube. It packs a punch in less than nine minutes. Have you seen it?

subsequently joined a class-action lawsuit, seeking damages for their poisoning.

- The Colorado Symphony performed a program called "Classically Cannabis: the High Note Series."
- The Associated Press reported that people can use EBT cards to purchase pot.
- "Puff, Pass and Paint" art classes and "Get Fit Stay Lit" yoga classes integrate getting high into everyday activities.

What message do teens get when pot is everywhere they look?

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